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NOTES FROM ABROAD.

BY THE REV. JOHN P. PETERS, PH.D.

In the notes in the March number of the *HEBREW STUDENT* I spoke of the Rev. J. N. Strassmaier's glossary to the II. and IV. vols. of Rawlinson's *Inscriptions of Western Asia*. I was mistaken in naming the IV. vol. Mr. Strassmaier writes me that besides the II. vol. it includes pages 9-26 and 53-58 of vol. I., pages 1-5 of vol. III. and 11-32 of V. He hopes later to publish a larger supplementary volume, a dictionary of the magical, religious, historical, and perhaps commercial texts. The present work will contain about 1000 pages when completed; 510 pages are already written, and the number of words on those pages is 4060.

Assyriologists are probably aware that vol. IV. of the *Inscriptions* is no longer to be had. I am informed that the British Museum will not republish that volume, but there is some hope that Mr. Pinches will undertake the task on his own responsibility. Since the first appearance of the volume in question many supplementary fragments have been found, which render its re-publication eminently desirable. The second half of vol. V. will appear in a few months; only eight plates are still lacking.

Before this reaches the *HEBREW STUDENT* a series of seven articles by Prof. Frdr. Delitzsch on the importance of Assyriology for the study of Hebrew will have begun to appear in the London *Athenaeum*. The same theme was chosen by Dr. Lotz for his *Probe-Vorlesung*, or trial lecture, before the theological faculty and students of the university of Leipzig in February of this year.

In a preliminary notice in the March number of the *STUDENT* of Lotz's *Quaestitionum de Historia Sabbati Libri Duo* I spoke of his theory as to the origin of the Sabbath among the ancient Babylonians. Their Sabbath, he contends, fell on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th of each month, so that at the end of the month there were two or three extra days not included in any week. The Hebrews in borrowing the institution (and name) Sabbath in so far changed it that with them the Sabbath fell on every seventh day without reference to the day of the month. This already existent custom of a seventh day rest, God sanctified later by his ordinance given through Moses. Dr. Lotz criticises and refutes Wellhausen's statements as to the late origin of the observance of the day among the Jews as one of universal rest, and its original intention merely as an opportunity for rest to slaves, cattle, &c., and contends that it was the same from the beginning to the end of Jewish history, a day of rest for all; nor was it specially a day of sacrifice, although sacrifice on the Sabbath was not forbidden among the Jews as it was among the Babylonians.

We have heard so much of late of the striking resemblance between the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts of the creation and the flood that it is interesting to see the differences noted also. In a note on p. 99, after considering the similarity of the narratives, Dr. Lotz points out the following main points in which the Hebrew is peculiar: in the narrative of creation; the spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters; every work of creation was done by the command of the divine word; the creation was completed in seven days; God gave names to the

day, the night, the firmament, &c.: in the narrative of the flood, the name Noa (נוֹעַ); ark instead of boat; the species of birds sent out.

Dr. Lotz bases his argument as to the origin of the choice of the seventh day as a day of rest among the Babylonians on their system of reckoning by sixes. I do not remember to have seen anything written on the origin of this mode of reckoning, and will accordingly take the opportunity of making a suggestion of my own on the subject, which I have worked out more fully in a letter to the Biblical Archaeological Society. It is well known that our systems of measuring are taken from the body. So also with counting, the body is used as the unit by which the man measures everything, and through which his knowledge is conditioned. He reckons on his fingers and naturally arrives at a decimal system, first counting five and then ten, and just as naturally arrives at a duodecimal system, first counting six, and then twelve. In the first case he counts the fingers exclusive of the whole hand, in the second case he includes the hand. The one is as *natural* as the other. In this way, from counting on the hands, have arisen both the decimal and the duodecimal systems, through the intermediate stages, apparently, of counting by fives and by sixes. The old Babylonians were still in the stages of counting by sixes, and, if Dr. Lotz's theory be correct, we may regard the week as a relic of that stage of arithmetical culture.

In a note to an article on יְהוָה in the January-February number of the STUDENT, I suggested that אֱבָן in such names as אֱלֹאָב, אֱכָרָם, &c., was a divine name. I have since ascertained that it is actually so used in some Phoenician inscriptions. Compare, for example, אֱבָשָׁרְדָן, Ab of Sardinia. It seems to be used in the same way furthermore, in some of the Sabaean or Himyaritic inscriptions, as in the name Wad-Ab, and perhaps in the name Rab-Abum.

In noticing Dr. Fritz Hommel's *Die vorsemitischen Kulturen in Aegypten und Babylonien* in the March number of the STUDENT, I objected to the statement, as an indubitable fact, of the theory of the Egyptian origin of the Phoenician alphabet. I was not at the time prepared to speak more definitely on the subject, but I may now say that I believe I am in a position to prove the Babylonian origin of our alphabet. According to their own tradition the Phoenicians were emigrants from Babylonia. Even if they emigrated as early as 3000 years B. C., and probably the date of their emigration was later, they must have left a country in which the art of writing was already known. We can go back with certainty to at least 3800 B. C. and say that writing was at that time already an old art in Babylonia. *A priori*, it seems probable that the Phoenicians coming from that country would know the art of writing and bring it with them, instead of borrowing an entirely new and strange method from the Egyptians. This *a priori* probability I believe I can now prove to be a fact. A detailed *resume* of the argument cannot be given until the paper is published.

A rumor reaches me that a much revised translation, or perhaps better American edition, of the 9th edition of Gesenius' Hebrew Dictionary is being prepared by two competent American Hebraists.

I believe I have seen in the book list of the HEBREW BOOK EXCHANGE Muerdter's *Kurzgefasste geschichte Babyloniens und Assyriens*. In reading the first part of the book I notice on page 20^{ss.} the god *Il* spoken of as the chief god of the Babylonian

pantheon. This was the opinion of Prof. Frdr. Delitzsch, which he has now retracted (cf. *HEBREW STUDENT*, Vol. II., p. 141), and I am not aware of any other authority for the statement. I believe Anu is generally regarded as the chief god.

On page 34, Muerdter speaks of Nebo as god of the planet Mercury. Lotz seeks to prove that Nusku, or Nusuku (נָסְךָ) was the god of that planet. Recent discoveries have revolutionized ancient Babylonian chronology also; so, for example, Sargon, king of Agade, who is spoken of on page 83 as ruling probably somewhere about 2000 B. C., is now known to have reigned about 4000 B. C.

The British Museum has just published a guide to the Konyunjik gallery of Assyrian-Babylonian antiquities. An historical and general introduction by Mr. T. G. Pinches gives the book an independent value. The present cheap edition costs 4d. A slightly more expensive edition (about 1s.), containing several plates, will appear shortly.

Last year Mr. Pinches published the first part of a Babylonian chrestomathy, the previously existing chrestomathies, all being Assyrian. The second part will probably appear soon after volume V. of *Western Asia Inscriptions*.

It has been for some time announced that Dr. Lotz is preparing a dictionary of Assyrian and Babylonian proper names.

In *HEBREW STUDENT* for January-February, p. 212, I said that Prof. Dillmann holds the chronological order of the component parts of the Hexateuch to be A B C D. He writes: "I have not said it, and do not affirm it, but say (p. 11 of introduction) that there are very old elements (*Bestandtheile*) in the very much revised document A."

ALCUIN'S BIBLE.

BY REV. JUSTIN A. SMITH, D. D.,

Editor of *The Standard*.

In the library of the British Museum is the manuscript of what is termed "Alchuine's [Alcuin's] Bible." It is a manuscript copy, in Latin, of the entire Bible, made, in part at least, by Alcuin himself, though in part, as seems likely, by some of the students in the Monastery of Tours, in Normandy, of which Alcuin was Abbot in the latter part of the eighth century and beginning of the ninth.

Of Alcuin's connection with the court of Charlemagne, and his active cooperation with that great ruler in efforts to promote good learning, and to correct in some degree the barbarism of the age, historical students are well aware. It seems, by a letter of Alcuin to a sister of the emperor, named Gisla, that by order of Charlemagne he wrote out a copy of the Latin Vulgate with emendations,—the date of this letter being A. D. 799. The Vulgate version of the Holy Scriptures, made by Jerome, had been, as appears by this letter, corrupted through the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers. It was Alcuin's purpose, under direction of the emperor, to correct these errors, and thus secure a pure version in the Latin tongue. It would appear that this version was completed in the year following